

PHILIPPIANS

The Epistle of

Joy



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 94:1-23

New Testament Reading – Acts 28:16-31

The Epistle of Joy

“For The Furtherance of the Gospel” # 2

Philippians 1:12-26

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As a Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus was passionate in his fidelity to the religion of Judaism and provoked in his hatred toward those who had become followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

- Saul carried a letter from the High Priest of the Temple that gave him full authority to arrest anyone who had confessed their faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the God-sent Messiah.
- For six years, Saul carried out his mission with intensity, and those who would not recant their faith in Jesus as Lord would be found guilty of blasphemy, and Saul would call for them to be stoned to death or thrown into the lion’s den.
- However, according to Acts chapters 9,22, and 26, Saul had such a dramatic encounter with Jesus that it convinced him that Jesus was the God-sent Messiah He claimed to be, and the Lord commissioned Saul to take that message to the Gentiles.

From that day forward, Paul's only passion was the furtherance of the gospel. In addition to the thousands of miles he journeyed by sea, Paul traveled over 10,000 miles by foot.



When Christians stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give account of our time on this earth, the Apostle Paul may be found responsible for bringing more people to salvation in Christ than any other person in human history.

The Church at Philippi was the first Christian Church in Europe.

- Paul started the church on the public confessions of faith of two families and perhaps a little girl from whom Paul freed from demon possession.
- While Paul and his companions only stayed in Philippi a short time, the Church kept in touch with Paul and supported him financially. In Philippians 4:15, Paul said, no other church had supported him as they had.
- In Philippians 1:3-8, Paul began his letter to the Philippians by thanking them for their love and support but also by reassuring them that everything that had happened to him had turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.
- In Philippians 1:8, Paul said his life circumstances were not the issue: ***“Only that in every way, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”***

1. In Spite of his Physical Limitations – Philippians 1:12 – “I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.”

- Being a Roman citizen and not charged with any crime against Rome, the authorities could not put Paul in the dungeon with other criminals, so they arranged for him to be placed under house arrest but chained to a soldier in the

Praetorian Guard.

- Paul was allowed to receive friends and openly discuss their doctrinal and theological issues. He could preach the gospel to those who desired to hear it and correspond with the churches he had started.
- Since the guards were attached to Paul, they heard every conversation, every gospel presentation, and every prayer.
- They also saw the contrast between:
 - Nero, an evil, vile, and wicked man who demanded total obedience; a man who only thought of himself and never of others, and a man to whom they had pledged to defend with their lives, and:
 - Paul, a gentle man who treated everyone with respect, even the guards, a man who never thought of himself, but always of others, and a man who had pledged to give his life if it would advance the spread of the gospel.
- For two years, the Apostle Paul was able to pour his life into these young men, and they took his testimony back to those who worked in Caesar's household, and according to Philippians 4:22, some of them became disciples of Christ.
- In Philippians 4:21-22, Paul wrote: ***"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household."***
- The gospel of Jesus Christ had reached the top two levels of Nero's staff, and they shared it with others.
- The light of Paul's testimony had brightened the lives of the guards, their slaves, and they were sharing it with others.
- The boldness of Paul's passionate ministry had emboldened the pastors of the area churches, and the gospel of Jesus Christ was being spread throughout the city of Rome.

2. In Spite of his Pastoral Opposition – Philippians 1:15-18 – *"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."*

- Paul said his circumstances had affected the other pastors in two ways.
 - Those who loved him were taking up the mantle and doing whatever they could to encourage him and to see that the gospel was continuing to be spread.
 - Those who were jealous or envious of him were doing all they could to prove that God had removed His hand from Paul's ministry and had anointed them to take his place.
 - Paul said none of this mattered to him; only that the gospel was being preached.

3. In Spite of Paul's Personal Realization That He May Face His Date With death – Philippians 1:19 – *"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."*

- Paul had an unshakable trust in the sovereignty of God:

- **His confidence was in the Lord's Will** – God was working all things together for Paul's good and for God's glory.
- **His confidence was in the prayers of the saints** – Paul knew the power of the prayers of God's people.
- **His confidence was in the Holy Spirit** – Paul trusted the Holy Spirit to give him whatever he needed.
- **His confidence was in the promise of Christ** – Paul remembered the charge Jesus gave to him on the day of his conversion – *“You are a chosen vessel to represent Me.”* Therefore, whatever happened to him, he would never be put to shame.
- **His confidence was in God's plans** – If the Lord let him live, he would continue the work he had been called to do. If he died, it would be because he had finished the work the Lord had called him to do.